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CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE PARTICULARLY
RECOMMENDED IN TIMES OF DANGER.

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S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

CHAPEL-ROYAL,

ST. JAMES'S,

On SUNDAY, JULY 4, 1779.

By S. GLASSE, D.D.F.R.S.

AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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*I*T has been remarked, as characteristic of Britons, that their Minds are very susceptible of melancholy Impressions on sudden Emergencies: But it is no less true, that, after a little Reflection, they rouse themselves from their temporary Despondency; and resume that well known Fortitude, which hath so often struck Terror into their Enemies, and reflected Glory on themselves.

It is the Design of this Discourse to assist and encourage Reflections of the most salutary Kind; to draw the Line, as carefully as may be, betwixt a dangerous Self-confidence on the one Hand, and a not less dangerous Despair on the other; each leading by different Paths to the same End; viz. to a fatal Inactivity.

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If,

If, while others are devoting their Influence, their Fortune, and their Lives to the Public Service, the Writer of the following Pages may be allowed to offer his Mite in the Way of his Profession; If, by directing my Countrymen to a never-failing Source of Confidence in GOD's Blessing on their spirited Endeavours, I may in any Measure quicken their Sense of Duty to GOD, their Sovereign, and their Country; I shall have Reason to rejoice in this incidental Opportunity of joining with my Brethren in a Work so necessary and important at the present juncture: Many of them, I doubt not, are pursuing the same Course, in their respective Stations, to much better Advantage than myself: Encouraging their Fellow-Citizens to Fortitude and Perseverance, in a Style more animated, and with Arguments more powerful, than any, which the Reader will meet with in the following Discourse.

S. G.

A
S E R M O N, &c.

P S A L M XLIV. V E R S E S 6, 7.

FOR I WILL NOT TRUST IN MY BOW, NEITHER SHALL
MY SWORD SAVE ME. BUT IT IS THOU THAT
SAVEST US FROM OUR ENEMIES, AND PUTTEST
THEM TO CONFUSION THAT HATE US,

THE principal Subjects of the Psalm
before us, are, a grateful Commemo-
ration of the former Mercies of God
towards His People; and Professions of humble
Confidence in the same Mercy for future De-
liverances from Distress.* *We have heard with*
our Ears, O God, saith the Psalmist, our Fathers

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have

* Verse 1,

have told us, what Works thou didst in their Days, in the Times of old. The Wonders of God's Providence for the Salvation of His People are recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, for the Consolation of His Church in every Age and Nation of the World; And the Hope and Comfort which these Scriptures afford, extend themselves not only to every Nation, but even to every Individual; who is thereby encouraged * to cry unto the LORD in his Trouble, in a steadfast Hope of Deliverance from Adversity.

The Psalmist in the next Verse particularizes the Mercies, which the People of God had received from the Hand of their Almighty Deliverer; in the Dispossession of the Canaanites, and the Establishment of the House of Jacob in their Land. We have heard, *How thou didst drive out the Heathen with thy Hand, and plantedst thine own Children in their Stead; how thou didst afflict the People, and cast them out; for a Punishment of their Idolatry and Un-*

* Psalm cvii.

belief. And indeed, the sacred History abounds with Instances of Divine Interposition in their Favour ; Numberless are the Proofs, that *they gat not the Land in Possession by their own Sword, neither did their own Arm save them ; It was His Right Hand and His Arm, which fought for them from Heaven ; It was the Light of His Countenance* which shone upon them from above, *because He had a Favour unto them.* On this Experience of past Mercies the Psalmist founds his Acknowledgement of the Power of God, and his Prayer for the Continuation of his Loving Kindness. *Thou art my King, O GOD ; command Deliverances for Jacob.* As if He had said, “ With all imaginable Thankfulness, I “ acknowledge Thee to be the Sovereign LORD “ of all Things ; O ! grant that I and all thy “ People may continue the blest Objects of thy “ saving Grace !” For *through Thee will we push down our Enemies ; and through Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us.* However persecuted the Church of God may be, yet her Faith faileth not : She knoweth
in

in whom her Confidence is placed ; Even in ONE, that is both able and willing to help to the uttermost all that put their Trust in HIM ; For, as the inspired Writer proceeds in the Words now under Consideration, *I will not trust in my Bow, neither shall my Sword save me ; But it is THOU that savest us from our Enemies, and puttest them to Confusion that hate us.* That is, I will not so trust in any human Means, however wisely calculated to procure Success, as to assert an Independence on the powerful Assistance of the LORD of Hosts ; HE it is, who, going forth with our Armies, is able to save us from the Hand of our Enemies ; HIS Hand and HIS Arm, stretched forth in our Defence, will enable us to put them to Shame that hate us,

I am well aware, that no Place is more unfit for political Disquisitions, than that, in which I now stand before you : And therefore you will not expect me to descend to Particulars on a Subject, concerning which I am neither competent

to judge, nor called upon to determine. But the most ignorant cannot be a Stranger to the peculiar Circumstances of our Situation at this Time ; and the coldest Heart cannot be indifferent about the Issue. On such an Occasion as this, what Duty is more incumbent on the Minister of GOD, than to direct the Attention of his Fellow-Christians, after a wise Exertion of the best Means of Defence which are in their Power, to HIM, who is *our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble?* To Him, who at His good Pleasure *maketh Wars to cease unto the Ends of the Earth ; who breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariot in the Fire?* What is more our bounden Duty, than to endeavour to dispel those Clouds of Sorrow and Despair, with which the Feeble-Hearted are too apt to be overspread ; by suggesting to our Hearers the never-ceasing Benefits of a constant superintending Providence ; by reminding them of past Instances of Divine Goodness towards
them,

them, as the best Ground of Comfort and religious Confidence for the Time to come? We also *have heard*, O GOD, and not only have *our Fathers told us*; even we ourselves have seen, what Thou hast done for us; in the Deliverances which thou hast wrought, and the Blessings which thou hast vouchsafed to our Church and Nation: And we are filled with an humble Hope, that Thou hast not now *cast us off*; that Thou hast not now *forgotten to be gracious*; nor, however provoked by our manifold Sins, hast in *Anger shut up Thy tender Mercies*: It is true, indeed, that we do not present ourselves before Thee, trusting in our own Righteousness, but in thy manifold and great Mercies; neither is our Confidence altogether placed in the Arm of Flesh, or in the Sword, for Safety and Defence: To have neglected the Means would surely have been most egregious Folly; to rest wholly upon them would be not less impious Presumption. After our best Exertion therefore of human
Means

Means of Success, we come before Thee, O GOD, in the Psalmist's Language of humble Supplication and holy Faith; and say, * *Plead Thou our Cause, O LORD, with them that strive with us, and fight Thou against them that fight against us: Take hold of Shield and Buckler, and stand up for our Help; Draw out also the Spear, and stop the Way against them that persecute us; Let our Souls be joyful in the LORD, yea let them rejoice in His Salvation.*

Such is the Consolation which Religion administers in every Situation of Danger and Distress: And were its Duties a thousand Times more burthenfome, than either the Lukewarm or the Infidel is wont to represent them, the Satisfaction derived from the Reflections which it affords, abundantly compensates for the most painful Restraints which it can enjoin. Its Restraints, indeed, are only such as are salutary, and every Way calculated for

* Psalm xxxv.

B

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our Benefit : but how numberless are its Comforts ; and how sure is its Support ? * *She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one that retaineth her : Particularly, in Circumstances of more than ordinary Solitude, she calleth to us with a gentle, but persuasive Voice, saying, † Be not afraid of sudden Fear, neither of the Desolation which the wicked bringeth upon thee ; For the LORD shall be thy Confidence, and shall keep thy Foot from being taken. Then shalt thou walk in thy Way safely, and thy Foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid ; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy Sleep shall be sweet. Far be it therefore from any, who profess to believe in God, to fold their Arms together in Despair ; Far be it from us, who have so largely tasted, and so frequently seen, that the LORD is gracious, to be cast down, and disquieted with hopeless Apprehensions : ‡ The LORD's Hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ;*

* Prov. iii. 18.

† Prov. iii. 25, 26.

‡ Isaiah lix. 1, 2.

neither

*neither is His Ear heavy, that it cannot hear : Only let us take Heed, that our Iniquities separate not betwixt us and our God ; And let not our Sins hide His Face from us, that He will not hear. A speedy Return to GOD, with hearty Purposes of better Obedience, is the proper Effect, which a Sense of Danger ought universally to produce, When Famine, Drought, and Poverty, oppressed the Children of Israel, the Prophet Haggai calls upon them to * consider their Ways: Ye have sown much, saith he, and bring in little : Ye eat, but ye have not enough ; Ye drink, but ye are not filled with Drink : Ye clothe you, but there is none warm : And he that earneth Wages, earneth Wages to put them into a Bag with Holes ; THEREFORE, thus saith the LORD of Hosts, CONSIDER YOUR WAYS. And if our present critical Circumstances should serve to call Home our dissipated Thoughts, and induce us to consider how far our Sins have been instrumental in bringing*

* Chap. i. 5, 6.

this Evil upon us ; if our Apprehension of Divine Judgments should serve to teach us the Necessity of returning to God, we shall eventually have Cause to welcome the Chastisement, and kiss the Rod that correcteth us.

But though the Transactions of War, however prosperous, must always be considered as Calamities in their Nature, big with Affliction to Individuals, and the Parent of Terror and Dismay ; yet where we trust our Cause to be a righteous one, and can with Confidence make our Appeal to the All-righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth, we see no Reason to fear the Imputation of Presumption, in adopting the Language of the Psalmist ; and saying,
** The LORD is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear ? The LORD is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid ? Though an Host should encamp against me, yet shall not my Heart be*

• Psalm xxvii. 1, 3.

afraid ;

afraid; though War should rise against me, yet will I put my Trust in Him.

Hitherto we have considered the blessed State of those, who live in a constant Dependence on the good Providence of GOD, particularly on the Approach of Danger, or under the Pressures of Adversity: We have at the same Time considered the Necessity of using those Means, which GOD hath put into our Hands for Self-Preservation, and even for Conquest over our Enemies: But it appears to be only a *partial* Consideration of the Subject, if the Arguments which have been urged, are not carried yet farther; extending even to that Warfare, those Weapons of Defence, and those Adversaries which are *spiritual*; Whose Attacks are levelled not merely against our temporal Interests, but against those which are infinitely more important, as they are eternal: * *We wrestle not*, saith the Apostle, exhorting the

* Chap. vi. 12.

Ephesians to Activity in their Christian Duty, *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places*: From the Consideration of the formidable Nature of our Enemies, He urges us to * *take unto us the whole Armour of GOD, that we may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done all, to stand.* In these Words is implied the necessary Concurrence of Man's Exertion with God's Assistance, as the most effectual Security against Presumption on the one Hand, and Despondency on the other. This Argument hath too much Need to be insisted on, at a Time, when Multitudes amongst us are so unreasonably confident of their own Ability to serve and to please God, as to despise His assisting Grace; or any better Righteousness than their own to recommend them to His Favour and Acceptance; while others are seen running into the opposite Ex-

• Ver. 13.

treme,

treme, and casting themselves so entirely on the Grace of God, and the Merits of their Redeemer, as to refuse one Effort of their own, to work out their Salvation. The former are strangely unmindful of that Weakness, of which their Pride is the most convincing Proof; and utterly regardless of that all-sufficient Atonement, on which alone any reasonable Hopes of Pardon can be founded; whilst the latter are debased, by an abject Sense of their natural Infirmities, into a lifeless Inactivity, and a most unprofitable State of Quietism.

Let us view for a Moment the Christian advancing chearfully in the right Path of Duty; neither discouraged by the Sense of his Weakness, because He knows that his *Sufficiency is of God*; nor confidently trusting to his own Strength, because sad Experience hath too fully taught him, how liable he is continually to fall: Let us behold him going forth to his Spiritual Conflict, with that holy Confidence, which

which once distinguished the Champion of Israel, against the * Defier of the Armies of the Living God : He trusteth not, altogether, that his *Sword*, or his *Bow*, that his own Arm, his own Exertions, his own Ability, shall save him ; but he relieth on the Grace of God for Support, and on His Mercy for Deliverance, and a Blessing on his best, however imperfect, Endeavours. *The Weapons of our Warfare*, saith St. Paul, † *are not carnal ; but mighty thro' God, to the pulling down the strong Holds of Sin ; Casting down every vain Imagination, and every high Thought that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Subjection every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.* The promised Land, that heavenly Canaan for which he strives, the Christian Soldier presumes not to get into his *Possession by his own Sword*, neither trusteth he that *his own Arm* shall save him ; His Reliance is on the Light of God's Countenance, to guide him in the Way ; and *His Right Hand*,

* 1 Sam. xvii.

† 2 Cor. x.

he believeth, will support him in all Dangers, and carry him through every Difficulty; till, having obtained a final Victory, through the Power of his Redeemer, He shall be admitted to the Celebration of a glorious Triumph, in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us, then, consider, how we may best conduct ourselves in our present Situation, whether we consider ourselves as engaged in those warlike Enterprizes, on the Event of which the Welfare of our Country depends; or as Soldiers, under the Banner of the Captain of our Salvation, engaged against the Principalities and Powers of Darkneſs. In either State of Things, it is obvious, that GOD muſt be our Friend, or Ruin muſt enſue. But let us aſk our own Minds, “ Can we reaſonably hope, “ that we have made the LORD of Hoſts our “ Friend, ſo that he will not *caſt us off*, and “ *put us to Shame*, but will go forth with us, “ and enable us to tread down our Enemies on

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“ every

“ every Side ?” This Question is of infinite Importance : *For if God be for us, who can be against us* with any Confidence of Success ? The Race is not always to the swift, nor the Battle always to the strong ; There is ONE that sitteth in Heaven over all ; and directs the Concerns of Men according to the Dictates of infinite Goodness, and unerring Wisdom : In this Persuasion it is our Duty rather to acquiesce, than to enter into a comparative View of our respective Merits ; For alas ! I fear that Boasting will be equally excluded from either Side, if the Basis of Confidence must be personal Merit. But sure I am, that if our Pretensions are weak and ill-supported to that *Righteousness which exalteth a Nation*, yet, in every Situation, great is the Efficacy of fervent Prayer : With all imaginable Earnestness, therefore, let us continue in Prayer to God, that He would not deal with us after our Sins, nor reward us according to our Iniquities : but that He would vouchsafe us such a Measure of His
Grace,

Grace, as will best prepare us to receive the full Dispensation of his Mercy: That henceforth may be wrought in us great *Carefulness* to discharge our Duty; great *Indignation* against Vice; great *Fear of God*; a *vehement Desire* of Virtue; and an ardent *Zeal* for the Religion of JESUS CHRIST the Saviour of the World.

Then may we reasonably encourage that Hope of God's Favour and Assistance, which, in our present Undertakings, will procure Success; and in our Conflicts with the Enemies of our *immortal Part*, will make us *more than Conquerors, thro' Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us*. Then, even in the worst of Times, tho' * *Darkness* surround our *Tabernacle*, and Joy and Gladness be for a Time removed from us, we shall be filled with that inward *Peace*, which the World can neither give, nor take away from us: We may be, whether for Correction or for Judgment,

* Job xviii.

troubled for a while on every Side; yet shall we not be distressed; We may be perplexed; yet not in Despair: We may be persecuted by our Enemies; yet not forsaken of GOD: We may for a Moment be cast down; yet not destroyed: On the contrary, these light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, and which are light indeed, when put in the Balance against the Recompence of the Reward, shall, if rightly improved, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, in GOD's heavenly Kingdom.

Nothing therefore remains, but that we humbly address the Throne of Grace, in that excellent Form of Words, which equally regards both our present and our future Welfare; and say,

O GOD, the Protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is STRONG, nothing is HOLY; Increase and multiply upon us Thy Mercy; that, Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so
pass

*pass through Things temporal, that we finally lose
not the Things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly
Father, for Jesus Christ's Sake, thy Son our LORD:*

To whom with the Father, and the Holy
Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour
and Glory, Thanksgiving and Praise, hence-
forth and for ever.

F I N I S.

And the Lord said, that was the day
when the Lord came: and the Lord
said, that was the day when the Lord

To whom will the Lord, and the Lord
said, that was the day when the Lord
said, that was the day when the Lord
said, that was the day when the Lord

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